KEVIN THE VAMPIRE

A MOST MYSTERIOUS MONSTER

Matt Brown

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nosy crow

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To Liz, thanks for the brilliant idea x
M.B.

To all the stars that lit my way,
especially my parents Stefania
and Maurizio
F.S.


OUT OF TOWN
LOWER DRUDGING PARK
SHADOW OF COLD MOUNTAIN
DEREK FESTOON'S HOUSE
SUSIE'S HOUSE
HERBERT GRIMM'S COLD TOAST SHOP
LOWER LOWER DRUDGING
NO TOPPINGS PIZZERIA SHOP
NOWHERE IN PARTICULAR
TRAVEL AGENT
TURNIP & SPROUT RESTAURANT
MAURICE BOTTOM'S STATUE
EDNA DEATHNUTS'S HAIRCUT SHOP
BANK of NO INTEREST
MRS THORNBURY'S POST OFFICE
SUPERMARKET
SHADOW OF COLD MOUNTAIN
UPPER LOWER DRUDGING
OUT OF TOWN
TOWN HALL
MAP of LOWER DRUDGING



ARE WE NEARLY THERE YET?

It was almost impossible to tell that Kevin Aurelius was a vampire. He looked just like any other ten-year-old.

Well, apart from his fangs obviously.

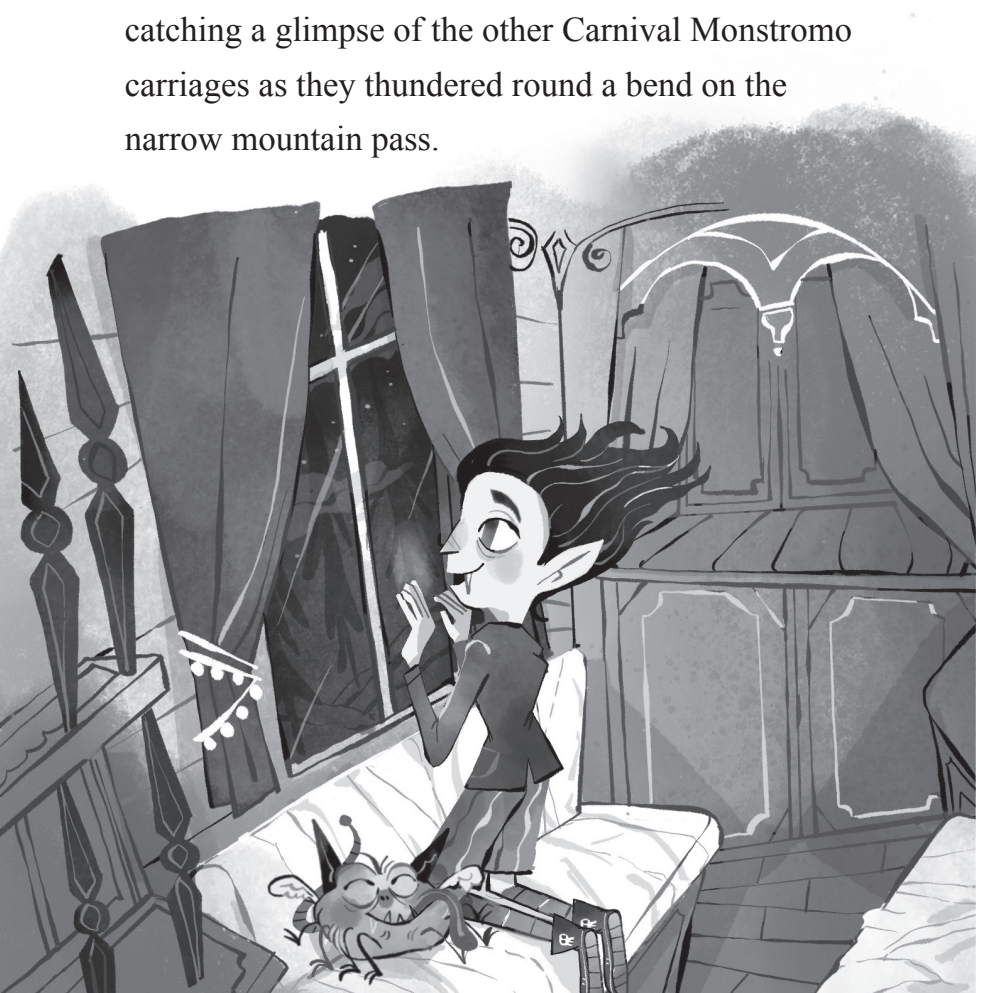
And the fact that he didn't cast a shadow.

And that he was immortal.

But apart from that it was *almost* impossible to tell.

Kevin wriggled his bottom and adjusted his shorts. His legs had become stuck to his seat, just like they always did on long journeys. He lifted them up, one at a time, and peeled them off the sticky plastic seat covering. Across from him sat his

mum and dad, and over in the gloomy corner of the carriage Kevin could just make out his brother and sister, Silus and Sylvia, hanging upside down from the ceiling, whispering and giggling. They were up to something – Kevin just knew it. He sighed and glanced out of the Aurelius family carriage window, catching a glimpse of the other Carnival Monstromo carriages as they thundered round a bend on the narrow mountain pass.



Kevin felt something nuzzle his leg. He smiled and looked down as Dog sat at his feet, ears pricked, tongue lolling out of the side of his mouth.

Dog was not a dog. Nobody was very sure what he was exactly, but Kevin loved Dog with all his hearts (vampires have two, a bit like cows. Or is that stomachs? Anyway, the point is that Kevin loved Dog a lot). Kevin told all his secrets to Dog. Like the secret that he wanted to ride dragons, or the other secret that he'd once accidentally eaten someone else's earwax, or his biggest secret of all, which was that he was lonely because he didn't really have any friends. Carnival Monstromo only stopped in places long enough to put on a show, which was never enough time to meet anyone.

Kevin reached into the pocket of his shorts and pulled out a treat. Dog's tail thumped with excitement as Kevin held it up.

"Wait for it," he said, smiling. "Wait for it."

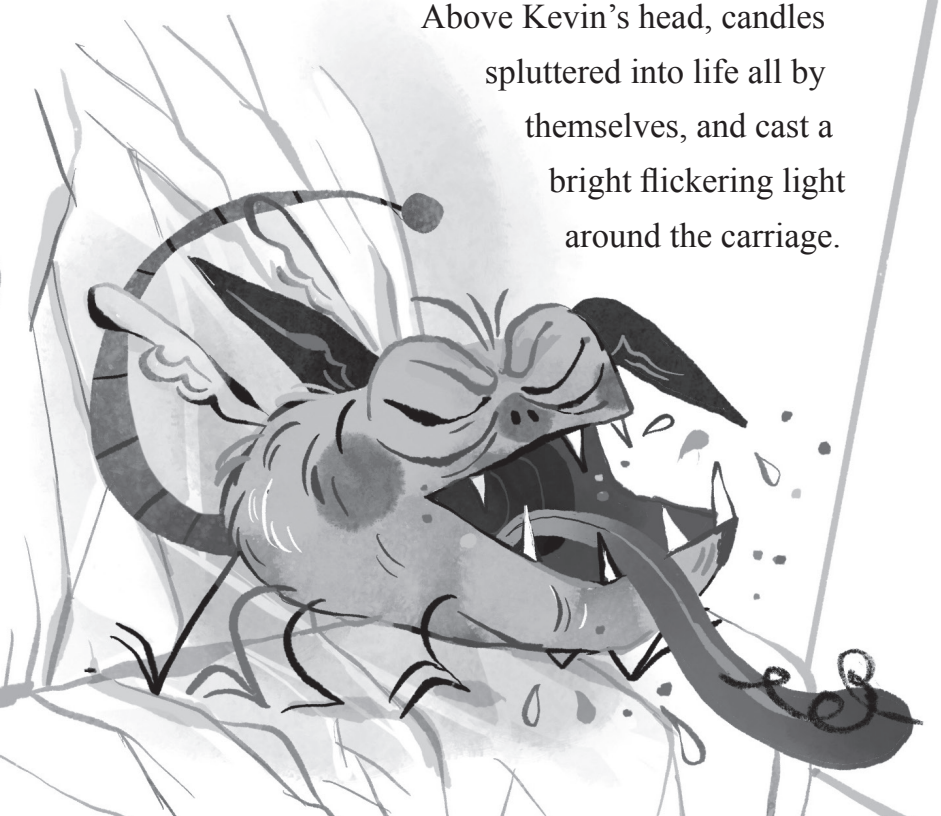
Kevin tossed the treat high into the air as Dog unfurled his furry wings and flew up. He opened

his mouth wide to reveal seven razor sharp teeth, grabbing the treat in mid-air. Then, munching happily, he flew back down to settle in Kevin's lap.

"Who's a good boy then?" Kevin whispered, giving the scales on Dog's belly a scratch.

Dog looked up at Kevin, burped and coughed up a ball of fur. The ball of fur suddenly grew fifteen legs and scuttled away to the corner of the carriage.

Outside the window, the dark began to gather. Above Kevin's head, candles spluttered into life all by themselves, and cast a bright flickering light around the carriage.



Kevin opened his book, **HIDEOUS FACTS AND DISGUSTING SECRETS OF MONSTERS, BRUTES AND BEASTS**, and began to read. He was trying to discover as much as possible about ancient sea monsters, and he'd just found a particularly interesting one. A species known as the Evil Lynns, who would lure people to the water's edge with their strange songs, then flick water right in their faces and steal their socks. Kevin was just reading about their strange underwater feeding habits (meatball spaghetti smothered in apple sauce) when a foot kicked him in the side of the head.

"OW!"

Kevin's mum looked up from the brochure she was reading. It had the words **FESTIVAL OF FEAR** on the front with a picture of a skeleton in a cape standing on the back of a fire-breathing dragon.

"Sorry, Kevin, did you say something?"



"Someone just kicked me," he said, rubbing his head and glaring at his siblings as they leapt around the carriage, head-springing off the seats.

Kevin's mum took a deep breath. "Silus! Sylvia!" she said. "Please be more careful of your brother."

Silus tutted as he forward-rolled down the aisle. "But, Mum," he moaned.

"We're only practising," added Sylvia, backwards-rolling past Silus. "And Kevin's head always gets in the way because it's so massive."

"It is not so massive," said Kevin, a little defensively. "It's completely normal-sized for a vampire of my age."

He turned and looked at his reflection in the window (to check how big his head actually was), but then remembered vampires don't have reflections.

Kevin's mum started grinding her fangs, and a large ruby that hung from a chain round her neck began to glow, as it always did when she got angry.

"Well, go and practise in the luggage compartment," she said.

"We can't," said Sylvia. "Uncle Drax's coffin is in there."

"He's fast asleep," added Silus.

Kevin's mum raised her left eyebrow. "Hmm, that is a problem," she said.

"Yes," said Kevin's dad, stroking his pointy black beard with his long, taloned fingers. "You don't want to disturb Uncle Drax. Remember what happened the last time someone woke him up?"

Kevin's mother shuddered at the memory. The white shock at the front of her enormous beehive of black hair shivered as she did.

"It took nearly two days to clean up the mess," added Kevin's dad. "Dreadful business."

Kevin's mum turned back to Silus and Sylvia. "Can't you try the dining carriage?"

"The werewolves are in there," said Silus, performing a headstand on the arm of a chair.

"I thought the werewolves were in the storage carriage," said Kevin's dad.

"No, Dad," said Sylvia, back-handspringing off

a small table. “Dr Frankie and Igor are in the storage carriage. They said they needed some room for a new top-secret experiment.”

“Well, you’ll just have to practise on the roof,” said their mum.

“The roof?” said Silus, turning towards Kevin. “Why can’t *he* go on the roof?’

“Yeah, he doesn’t have anything to practise.” said Sylvia.

Kevin’s mum looked at him. Kevin knew what was coming next. His brother and sister always got their way because they were the carnival’s top performers, and Kevin wasn’t good at anything yet.

“Would you mind, Kevin?” she said, smiling. “Your brother and sister need to practise and Dog would probably like a breath of fresh air.”

Kevin stared at Sylvia and Silus.

“OK,” he grumbled, although it wasn’t OK at all.

“You can easily get up to the roof – just change into a bat and fly,” sniggered Silus.



“Don’t be mean to your brother,” said Kevin’s mum as she started to read her brochure again.

Silus and Sylvia giggled as Kevin picked up Dog and clambered out of the carriage window and up on to the roof. They knew he couldn’t turn into a bat and always teased him about it. It wasn’t Kevin’s fault. Bat transformation was a lot harder than it looked. The last time he’d tried he’d turned himself into a box of doughnuts, which Silus and Sylvia had teased him about for days.

"Are we nearly there yet, Gog?" asked Kevin, sitting down next to the driver on the roof.

Gogmagog the ogre was Carnival Monstromo's Creature Keeper and carriage driver. In the bright moonlight his usually pale greeny-grey skin looked more like the colour of sludgy stinky pondweed than his usual elephant-snot colour. Gogmagog shook the reins in his gigantic hands. The dragon, Branwen, attached to the other end blew out huge jets of fire as she leapt over a hedgerow, dragging the carriages into the air behind her.

"ONE HOUR," boomed Gog, steering the dragon across a field. "BUT WE STOP AT NEXT SERVICE STATION. BRANNIE NEED A DRINK AND ME IS BURSTING FOR A WEE."

MONSTER FACT FILE



Name: Kevin Aurelius

Species: Vampire (from the Old Country)

Carnival Job: None yet as too young. Hopes to fly dragons or become the Creature Keeper.

Special Move(s): Ability to speak many monster languages.

Likes: Dog, Gogmagog the ogre, being with all the creatures in the carnival, flying Brannie the dragon.

Dislikes: His brother and sister. No one listening to him. Not having a friend.